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You're not alone

By Elise L. Moore, C.S.B.

My tire blew out as I was returning from a late night meeting. We lived in the country. This was a double highway, but there were no cars visible in either direction. No houses. No stores for several miles. I didn't have a cellular phone.

My headlights pierced the cold as I walked toward the darkness to inspect a very flat tire. A woman alone, stranded. Was it fear or the falling temperature that caused the sudden shudder?

But I've been in worse situations and proved over and over that "God is... a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1). I am never a woman alone. God is always present with me, with everyone.

I didn't want to slide into a pit of fear. I'd only have to claw my way back to quietude in order to pray properly. So I stopped the Hitchcock-style speculations and started to think about God in order to regain mental control.

There were no words to this prayer. I didn't start pleading with the Almighty to help me. If God is all-knowing and all-seeing, I didn't need to inform Him or ask for help. I trusted that God was there and knew my need.

My prayer was more a reaching out for reassurance, like a child reaching for a parent's hand. I trusted that God would protect me that He knew my need and would supply a tangible answer. I thought of a favorite Bible promise: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:56). Well, my path didn't need directing. At that moment I wasn't going anywhere. But I affirmed that God directs everyone's path.

God, divine Love, would send someone who was honest and honorable. I was trusting my safety to God, not to chance or random acts of kindness.

At that moment, an old sedan pulled into the light of my headlights. I glanced in the open passenger window. Fast-food wrappers, soda cans, papers, and parts cluttered the seat, the dash, the floor. But the eyes looking at me were clear and showed concern. He invited me to get into the car. Instead, I gave him my home phone number and asked him to tell my husband to come for me. All that paper, but not a pen between us. I repeated the number and hoped he'd remember by the time he found a phone.

Back in my car, I settled in for a long wait. This was the time for prayer. All sorts of doubts danced into my thoughts. Each doubt I met with affirmations of God's presence, power, and care.

Would the fellow remember the number? I knew that God is divine Mind and doesn't forget. Each of us reflects this Mind and the accurate memory that goes with it. This stranger was moved by Mind to stop and help me. He certainly reflected all the intelligence he needed to complete the task. In fact, I saw how silly it was to doubt his sincerity or ability.

What if someone with bad intentions saw me during the long wait? The phrase "hid with Christ in God" popped into thought. It's from the Bible (see Col. 3:3) and is a refrain in a hymn ("Christian Science Hymnal," No. 370). The hymn begins, "We are hid with Christ forever/ In the Father's holy plan." The second verse continues:

Hid with Christ in God, O gladness:

O the meekness and the might,

When the risen Christ has lifted

All our thoughts into the light.

This was a comforting thought. I was hidden from those with evil intentions. I was visible only to those whose thoughts were illumined by Christ.

No one else stopped during the 40 minutes it took for my husband to reach me. God had spoken to one person. That person kindly brought the help I needed. I was hidden from harm and safe in God's loving care.

When I remember to embrace others in the world in prayer, I think of this incident and the inspiration that came with it. Each child and adult can feel the supporting care of the Holy Spirit. We are all hid with Christ in God, as He meets our need.

Love inspires, illumines, designates, and leads the way.

Mary Baker Eddy

(founder of the Monitor)